

National PM Technical Committee
July 29-31, 2003, Bridger, MT
Minutes

Attendees: John Dickerson, Dave Burgdorf, Joel Douglas, Dan Ogle, Larry Holzworth, John Lloyd-Reilly, Rick White, John Englert, Jody Holzworth

- 1) Review Action Items (last meeting) (Englert)
 - a) Laboratories – report distributed. NPMAC wanted an analysis of how to meet PMC lab test needs.
 - i) What services do we need which are not available through commercial labs?
 - ii) What is current need for analysis right now?
 - iii) **Action Item** – Joel Douglas – have NPMTC (Joel put together) send out survey for forage quality/seed germ requirements/mode of seed reproduction/tissue culture/water analysis, compile results, see what it would take to ramp up at a PMC vs. bulk contract vs. each PMC doing their own thing.
- 2) Invasive species issues (Dickerson)
 - a) NRCS Invasive Species Policy - Does it reflect our potential to lead in this area? Is it overly optimistic about field office ability to act?
 - b) Areas of adaptation – what/how to use releases --- invasive species issue related
 - i) Need to be very clear about the geographic area the release is intended for, as well as any areas the release should not be used along with the reasons for not using.
 - ii) Englert – incorporate such guidelines into the NPM and in interim guidelines.
- 3) VEGSPEC- chronic problems, recommend it be removed from on-line status. (Dickerson)
 - a) Consensus is that VegSpec should be discontinued until it can be fixed so that bad plant recommendations and liability is limited.
 - b) **Action Item**
 - i) NPMTC - Need to compile 3-5 examples from each region of where VegSpec does not work; send to Rick by August 29.
 - ii) Rick White - Need to discuss current status with Scott Peterson and Doug Williams
 - iii) Rick White - Need to draft letter recommending discontinuing VegSpec; Rick sign? NPMAC sign?
- 4) POMS (Englert)
 - a) Update on Status
 - b) How PMCs can assist with pdf publication entries in the plant-materials data base
 - i) Englert will prepare guidelines for scanning documents using OCR and making documents 508 compliant; these will be sent to PMCs and PMSs once prepared.
- 5) Discontinued Releases (Englert)
 - a) PMCs moving forward with discontinuing additional releases
 - b) “ALLPM” releases were discussed and decisions were made on who to assign to or if they should be discontinued.

- 6) Preservation of germplasm - proper long-term storage & OIG Audit
 - a) Use of “should” in manual “suggests” but does not require transfer of plant materials
 - i) Manual needs update
 - ii) Bulletin during interim
 - iii) Criteria need clarification
 - (1) What level of releases need to be maintained? **All releases must be maintained**
 - (2) Original accessions – **Consensus is to store what is still available after we are done with it**
 - (3) Releases for distribution to researchers through GRIN – **Consensus is to have GRIN users contact the originating PMC to request materials**
 - b) Periodic inventory and monitoring to determine compliance – **National PMC with work with GRIN once per year to assess germplasm storage or PM releases**
 - c) Species we are working with
 - i) Studies, field plantings, trials – **Species data entered in POMS is not complete; this needs to be emphasized**
 - (1) **Action Item – Englert/White - Identify PMCs which don’t have data in or are deficient in data entry and contact them directly, if they don’t comply then contact the STC as needed.**
 - ii) Accession information unavailable (accession and studies not linked).
 - d) Questions for Loren Wiesner
 - i) Store bulked materials versus original accessions? Harvesting materials from initial collections would probably be the most efficient way of maintaining the genetic materials.
 - ii) Seed go to NPGS curators versus go to Seed Storage Lab? Work directly with NSSL and they will ask if site needs it.
 - iii) One possibility – put leftovers of initial collections in black box controlled storage, then only allow PMCs access to the seed for first 5 years, then it becomes public domain – this would work.
 - iv) Vegetative collections made, but seed harvested from the plant. - Yes
 - v) Old, possible ungerminable seed in storage – Yes, need to contact on a case-by-case basis.
 - e) Comments from Loren Wiesner
 - i) Interested in preservation of native collections and releases available from the PM Program
 - ii) Need an MOU for storage of initial collections in black box storage. Don’t need MOU for release storage or regular storage.
- 7) Revisions, updates, amendments to National Plant Materials Manual (Englert)
 - a) Needs relative to PM – Englert is compiling lists of needed changes and some draft policy. Not sure when this effort can be put on a faster track. NPMM probably needs a major revision as the first step, then anything after that submit as amendments.
 - b) **Action Item - NPMTC – provide input on guidelines regarding work with Native American Tribes to Dave Burgdorf by Sept 15.**
 - c) Usefulness to TSPs – Larry Clark raised the question on whether in the GM there is any reference that the NPMM represents policy for the Plant Materials Program.

- i) Decision – NPMM has little usefulness to TSPs, though products from the PM Program are relevant.
- 8) Biomass/biofuel proposal
 - a) Team activity and status (Burgdorf)
 - i) Committee has been formed and will have a teleconference the week of Aug 11 to start pulling information together for a proposal
 - b) White paper on carbon sequestration & biomass/biofuel (for Chief) (J. Holzworth)
 - i) This will show what PM can do in this arena.
 - ii) **Action Item – Jody Holzworth – incorporate technical comments into biofuels/biomass white paper and send to NPMTC for review**
- 9) Research agency – research program letter/position (letter for Gayle Norman to take forward)
 - a) **Action Item - John Lloyd-Reilley - Letter is being drafted by a NPMTC sub committee then it will be sent around for review**
- 10) Proposed National PM Training Conference (Douglas/White)
 - a) Outline for the training conference was distributed and discussed
- 11) Laboratory operations – Cost analysis (Douglas) – sought by NPMAC
 - a) NPMAC wanted an analysis of the need and potential costs for addressing laboratory testing needs
 - b) **Action Item – Joel Douglas - have NPMTC (Joel put together) send out survey for forage quality/ seed germ requirements/ mode of seed reproduction/tissue culture/water analysis, compile results, see what it would take to ramp up at a PMC vs. bulk contract vs. each PMC doing their own thing.**
- 12) Marketing efforts – update & new areas to focus upon (J. Holzworth)
 - a) National brochure – brochure has been finished and 20,000 copies are being printed. Distribution will be to PM offices, State offices, and will be used for meetings, exhibits, etc.
 - b) Farm Bill fact sheet – Distribution through PAS’ has been a big success. One copy will be inserted into the next issue of Plants: A Growing Alternative which is currently at the printers and which goes out to all NRCS offices as well as others
 - c) E-newsletter – current distribution is at 1500+. There were 700 new sign-ups after the first issue. Next issue on drought and fire due out in early August. Future issues include Agroforestry (Sept/Oct) and Grazing (Nov/Dec).
 - d) Video – existing video has been identified and will be utilized. Jody and Bob Stobaugh will be shooting additional video in August. Video will be inspirational and cover the many facets of Plant Materials work and its benefits.
 - i) NPMAC suggestion – include video clip downloadable from the web site.
 - ii) Do we have or can we create a 2-3 minute continuous video to be used for farm days, exhibits, etc.
 - e) Marketing Toolkit - useful, practical things that PMCs and PMSs can use
 - i) Probably best to provide small items right now, but wait until National Meeting to roll out the entire package

- ii) Items
 - (1) Continuous loop video
 - (2) Fact sheet and brochure templates
 - (3) List of marketing ideas and tools
 - (4) Marketing basic information and how tos
 - (5) Format for developing a local marketing plan
 - f) PM contacts list of Influential People
- 13) Security Assessments and Audits – update (White)
 - a) All PMCs have been surveyed; information has been compiled into a database
 - b) Rick has requested \$3.5M in security improvements needed – not sure where which money will come from.
- 14) PM list server (Englert)
 - a) Do we need a list server just for PM staff?
 - i) Decision – Not needed at this time, people can set up distribution lists in their outlook Address Books
- 15) PART – status and follow-up – areas in need of attention (White/Englert)
 - a) Strategic plan – need and team to develop
 - b) Performance goals
 - i) Long term vs. annual
 - ii) Output vs. outcome
 - iii) Expectations – define activities or products that lead to resource improvement: criteria that are a measure or function of activity intensity
 - (1) Meets minimum
 - (2) Exceeds minimum
 - (3) Enhanced
 - c) Performance index
 - i) Products delivered: technology and releases developed, transferred and marketing
 - (1) Are there more items which need to be looked at to provide a more complete look at performance
 - ii) Measure of quality
 - d) Budgeting
 - i) In relation to goals addressed
 - ii) With respect to performance (quantity and quality)
 - e) Species matrix – ID of how many potential species need work (how much is enough?)
 - i) How are gaps identified and dealt with?
 - (1) Discussion:
 - (a) There may be a number of potential releases which need extensive breeding work to overcome some barriers.
 - (b) Is there a gap for “packages” which include releases and technology to meet a specific need.
 - ii) Which ones receive attention – criteria/guidelines to determine priorities
 - (1) Doing the right thing vs. doing things right
 - (2) Routine topic for Advisory Meetings?

- iii) Which ones are currently receiving attention
- iv) What unit (geographic, ecological, practices, etc.) should be considered – lump vs. split
- f) Efficiency – how to determine & measure
 - i) Cost per product – comparison to others doing same work
 - ii) Shorten time line: identify priority work, undertake, complete
 - iii) Improvement within program – center by center
 - iv) Shift in product emphasis – greater benefits accrue from current vs. past

16) Plant Releases

- a) Improved procedures for getting approvals for new releases

17) Miscellaneous

- a) National PM Information Coordinator vacancy – position frozen due to reorganization
- b) NRCS regional reorganization--regional PMS positions
 - i) designed to improve coordination and streamline technology delivery
 - ii) would not impact anyone within the State Office level
 - iii) will be an early out opportunity; everyone affected will have a job
 - iv) 3 Technology Centers (located in east, central, and west)
 - v) all TSP policies will be assigned to Deputy for Science and Technology
 - vi) all Institutes and Cooperating Scientist functions will be abolished and realigned to Technology Centers
 - vii) Regional Offices will be shrunk to 3, and there will be 3 regional assistant chiefs
 - viii) Assumption is that there will be 3 Regional Plant Materials Coordinators
 - ix) To be implemented by the end of the calendar year
- c) National PM STC Advisory committee meeting & actions
- d) Fire plan (L. Holzworth)
- e) Field Plantings – role, importance, alternatives – how widespread?

18) PMC Reviews and dealing with major problems/issues at PMCs

- a) Currently we can't do much with PMC Quality Assurance Reviews
- b) **Action Item** – NPMTC – **Create a list of major problems or issues which may afflict many or all PMCs, indicate what is needed to solve the problem, indicate what the impact of doing nothing is, and offer a list of actions to be taken to help resolve the problem.**
- c) Potential List of items
 - i) Foundation Seed/Plant Maintenance
 - (1) Some PMCs currently contract some or all of this to commercial or universities (WA, ND, ID)
 - (2) Discussion – a little reluctant to turn over Foundation production to others
 - ii) Foundation Seed/Plant Quality
 - iii) Release documentation
 - (1) Lack of field testing before release – inadequate data
 - (2) Availability of seed/plants for commercial distribution when a release is made
 - iv) IEP nurseries – inadequate ecotype collections
 - v) Quality of Publications (Tech Notes, Plant Guides, papers) and technology transfer

- vi) Seed/Plant Long-term Storage
- vii) Field Office technical assistance and training (demonstrations, training sessions)
- viii) Long Range Plan prioritization/focus
- ix) Effect of reimbursables on operations and activities
- x) Staff and Budget (underlying issues across all of these)